

Preservation Guidelines

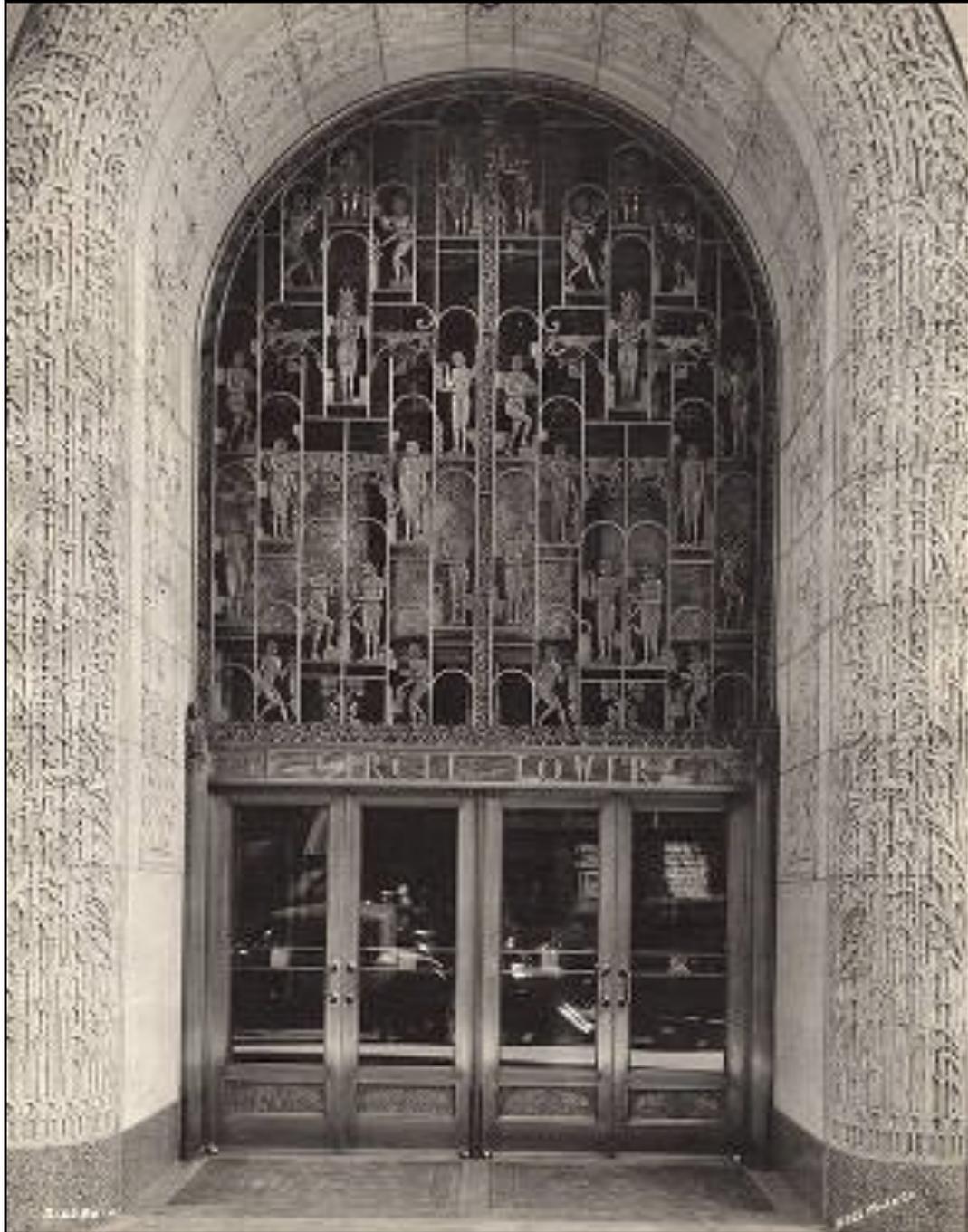


Photo Source: East Market Street Entrance to Circle Tower, 1930, Indiana Historical Society Collection

PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The IHPC's Authority To Approve

State statute I.C. 36-7-11.1 authorizes the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) to review and approve actions before they occur in a designated district, including the following:

- Construction of any structure
- Reconstruction of any structure
- Alteration of any structure
- Demolition of any structure
- Alteration to the streetscape
- Rezoning
- Variance of Use
- Variance of Development Standards

Unless otherwise stated in this plan, it is presumed that all actions related to the above items **MUST BE APPROVED** by the IHPC and it is presumed that related preservation guidelines are enforceable.

Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs)

The IHPC grants approvals by issuing Certificates of Appropriateness, or in special circumstances, Certificates of Authorization (in the case of an inappropriate action approved for a special circumstance). The following sections contain the preservation guidelines for this historic district. The IHPC will use the guidelines when it reviews applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.

Purpose of Preservation Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to help property owners choose an appropriate approach to issues that arise when working on buildings and when developing in this district. They are meant to indicate a range of alternative approaches that may differ from building to building and from property to property, but which are nevertheless compatible with the character of Monument Circle District. The preservation plan's building resource inventory will be used as a reference for determining significant features that convey this character. The guidelines are not meant to restrict creativity, but rather are meant to suggest appropriate approaches and guard against unsympathetic actions.

Where to Find Help

The IHPC staff may be consulted for assistance in meeting the preservation guidelines, applying for Certificates of Appropriateness, and for obtaining IHPC rules, policies, and procedures. Staff office information can be found in the Resources section of this plan.

Informational Note

A diagram showing the guideline hierarchy of the following preservation objectives, preservation directives, and reference standards can be found on page 225 of this section.



Photo Source: Circle Tower and Monument Circle, 1930, Indiana Historical Society Collection

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PRESERVATION STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Monument Circle District is located in the heart of downtown Indianapolis. Its boundaries encompass the central portion of the city's original Mile Square plat, designed in 1821 and influenced by the Pierre L'Enfant plan for our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

The district includes the surviving resources of the historic downtown established in the nineteenth century and more recent resources from the early, mid- and late-twentieth century. It contains both historic and architecturally significant buildings constructed in a variety of styles, materials, shapes, and sizes. Most of the buildings were architect-designed, many by local talented firms which drew attention to the city's civic pride in its built environment. Different areas symbolized unique functions, including the city's historic retail and financial districts on Washington and Market Streets, various entertainment and recreational venues that served the local population, and Monument Circle, originally a residential neighborhood that evolved into an urban public plaza of prestigious landmark buildings. The oldest surviving church within the Mile Square also remains intact in its original location on the Circle.

Additionally, the streets within the boundaries exhibit unique features. Washington Street, the planned main street of the city, is a segment of the National Road stretching from Maryland to Illinois, with the Indianapolis portion completed in the late 1820s. Monument Circle is the circular street designated as the center of the original Mile Square plat and still today remains the nucleus of downtown Indianapolis. The four streets running north, south, east, and west of Monument Circle provide vistas of the architecture that make up the city's public and private spaces, just as intended when the city was founded. Virginia Avenue at the southeast corner of the district is the only surviving diagonal street from Ralston and Fordham's plan.

Altogether, the district represents a continuous history of this city from inception to the present. Its buildings and streets are the physical manifestations of the dreams, beliefs, and work its citizens poured into the place they identified as their home and their livelihood. The IHPC desires to protect this history, preserve its physical fabric, and promote the continued evolution of downtown as the showcase of Indianapolis.

WHY PRESERVE?

- Indianapolis' historic urban core embodies the city's spirit, character, and identity.
- It tells compelling stories of its past by representing important local events and trends, reflecting the lives of significant citizens, and illustrating distinctive and artistic design achievement.
- The Monument Circle District Preservation Plan is designed to recognize this irreplaceable city heritage.
- Through this plan, it is the mission of the IHPC to preserve the district's character and fabric for all present and future citizens of Marion County, Indiana.

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PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

Protect, preserve, and promote the character of Monument Circle District as the “showcase” of the City of Indianapolis, by guiding sensitive change that respects the original planning concept while also contributing to the context of its varied architectural styles and eras.

To this end, the following criteria will serve as the objectives to guide the decisions of the IHPC when renovation, alterations, additions, signage, demolition, new construction or land use changes are proposed and considered for appropriateness within the district.

Does the action...

Protect and preserve character-defining features of architecturally or historically significant buildings or landscapes which represent the district’s eras of significance?

Contribute to the context in which work is proposed?

Promote the use of high quality design using durable materials?

Enhance and improve the design quality and character of the streetscapes?

Remain sensitive to the architectural and historic context when introducing alternative or sustainable materials or energy conserving solutions?

Enhance and balance the pedestrian and vehicular activities in the public spaces?

Remain sensitive to the architectural and historic context when improving accessibility?

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PRESERVATION DIRECTIVES

The preservation of Monument Circle District and its significance to the identity of the City of Indianapolis requires a clear set of directives as a premise of actions taken by the IHPC. They include:

Existing Buildings

Recognize and preserve the significant historic and architectural character of the building and its context.

Accommodate change, modernization, and energy efficiency without sacrificing significant historic or architectural character.

Retain significant original materials that can be reasonably retained and restored, especially where highly visible.

Building façades (all or part) that do not face streets and were not designed to be viewed by the general public may be considered for greater alteration and substitution of original material than facades that face streets and were designed to be seen.

Accommodate new signs responsive to the building's sign history. Their installation should not unnecessarily obscure significant original material, should minimize damage to original materials, and should be compatible with the building design in size, shape, illumination, content and material.

Additions to Existing Buildings

Encourage a high standard of design contributing to the significance and integrity of the building and district.

Encourage design complementary to the historic fabric and respectful of the features, based either on historic reference or contemporary design.

Discourage additions detracting from the original scale, mass, and character of the building and its context, which shall remain recognizable.

New Buildings

Encourage a high standard of design contributing to the significance and integrity of the building and district.

Encourage design complementary to the historic fabric and respectful of the features, based either on historic reference or contemporary design.

Encourage design contributing to the continuum of architectural expressions in the district.

Encourage design that promotes interaction with the streetscape and preserves its integrity and continuity.

Integrate signage within the design concept.

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Public Infrastructure and Streetscape

Encourage physical development worthy of its unique location in Monument Circle District, the most historically significant public space in Indiana.¹

Respect the original Ralston Plan when considering any modifications to the public rights-of-way.

Respect the historic views and vistas, both horizontal and vertical.

Reflect the level of quality and significance established by the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and its surrounding public space when considering infrastructure and streetscape amenities.

Discourage building structures into the public rights-of-way.

Land Use

The IHPC shall utilize the Central Business District One (CBD-1) Regulations of the Zoning Ordinance of Marion County, Indiana as the basis for its land use review process in Monument Circle District.

Demolition

Definition: For the purpose of this plan, demolition shall be defined as the razing, wrecking or removal by any means of the entire or partial exterior of a structure.

Discourage demolition or removal of architectural elements that result in a loss to the character of a building or the district.

The criteria for evaluating proposed demolition, total or partial, are found in the Demolition Guidelines of the Wholesale District Historic Area Preservation Plan, as adopted by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission and the Metropolitan Development Commission, and shall serve as a guide when considering demolition in Monument Circle District.

1. American Planning Association Designated Monument Circle one of the Top 10 Great Public Spaces for 2011 and recognized it for its unique assemblage of buildings & institutions.

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REFERENCE STANDARDS

The Wholesale District Historic Area Preservation Plan, the City of Indianapolis Regional Center Plan and Design Guidelines, and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties will supplement the Monument Circle District’s Preservation Objectives and District Directives and be given consideration when renovation, alterations, additions, signage, demolition, new construction or land use changes will be reviewed by the IHPC and its staff.

Some aspects of these reference standards may not apply to cases in the Monument Circle District. They are to be used as a guide only where appropriate.

Definition of the Wholesale District Historic Area Preservation Plan

The Wholesale District Historic Area Preservation Plan, adopted by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Indianapolis Metropolitan Development Commission in 1990, is intended to officially designate and delineate the historic area known as the Wholesale District. This district is located adjacent to Monument Circle District and shares a common boundary, with Monument Circle District to the north and the Wholesale District to the south. The Preservation Plan provides general and specific criteria for preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and development within the boundaries of the Wholesale District.

Definition of the City of Indianapolis Regional Center Plan and Design Guidelines

The Regional Center Plan and Design Guidelines are intended to support and enhance the Regional Center Zoning approval process, established in 1970 with adoption of the Regional Center overlay zoning ordinance. The Regional Center ordinance regulates development within the Regional Center and within the North Meridian Street Corridor. Monument Circle District falls entirely within the defined boundary of the Regional Center.

Definition of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The Standards, revised in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the July 12, 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). They are intended to provide guidance to historic building owners and building managers, preservation consultants, architects, contractors, and project reviewers prior to treatment. These Standards have served as the basis of Design Guidelines across the country for historic district commissions, review boards, and other local agencies charged with the protection of historic resources.



Photo Source: Monument Circle Street Scene, 1925, Indiana Historical Society Collection

PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

PRESERVATION GUIDELINES DIAGRAM

